

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An architecture and method of providing minimal functionality multimedia devices having the capability of communication across networks, which provides a simple and low-MIPS platform to build computer-based devices. Minimal function devices such as video displays, keyboards, microphones, speakers and mice are connected across the network and associated in various configurations as terminal devices to perform the desired function. Terminal devices communicate over an IP network with a terminal server. The terminal server performs the necessary computing and implements the necessary protocols for the terminal devices, while the terminal devices implement minimum communications protocols to communicate their data with the terminal server. When the terminal device is connected to the IP-based network, the device announces its availability to the network and is discovered by the appropriate computing device. The terminal device then describes its capabilities to the computing device and is bound to a transport address. Once it is bound to the transport address, the terminal device is registered to a user. When a number of individual devices are registered, the devices are assembled into a virtual device and the appropriate applications and protocols are run on the computing device and associated with the terminal devices. The terminal device is a combination of a multimedia-input/output devices, or individual multimedia-input/output devices.